ABSTRACT

In a vehicle occupant restraint system for restraining a lower part of a vehicle occupant, an arrangement for moving a restraining member from a retracted position to a deployed position upon detection and/or prediction of a vehicle crash by a crash sensor is adapted in such a manner that the restraining member cannot be made to move from the deployed position to the retracted position by an external force applied to the restraining member but can be made to move from the retracted position to the deployed position and from the deployed position back to the retracted position by a force transmitted from a power actuator to the restraining member via a power transmitting member. Thus, while the restraining member is capable of withstanding the load of restraining the vehicle occupant, even when the restraining member is deployed, it can be brought back to the retracted position so that the restraining system can be used repeatedly. This is particularly significant when the crash sensor includes a crash prediction sensor because the prediction could be wrong and the restraining member may have to be deployed a number of times even when a vehicle crash has never occurred.